DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 204 686 CG 015 304

AUTHOR	Gottfredson, Gary D.
TITLE	Schooling and Delinquency Prevention: Some Practical Ideas for Educators, Parents, Program Developers, and Researchers.
INSTITUTION	Johns Hopkins Univ., Baltimore, Md. Center for Social Organization of Schools.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	CSOS-R-304
PUB DATE	Feb 81
GRANT	NIE-G-80-113
NOTE	32p.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Change Strategies; Delinquency; *Delinquency Prevention; Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; *Organizational Change; Peer Influence; *Reinforcement; Rewards; *School Role; Social Psychology; *Student Experience; Youth Problems

ABSTRACT

This report, prepared by the Studies in Delinquency and School Environments program, presents a theory of delinquency and proposes an action research strategy to develop delinquency prevention programs in schools. The materials build on the theories of Hirschi and Bandura, and assume that: (1) home and school experiences can be rewarding or unrewarding; (2) school, community, and family influence the development of stakes in conformity by the reinforcement properties of the environments provided; and (3) delinquency can be prevented by altering reward structures to develop stakes in conformity and ties to parents, school, work, and nondelinquent peers. Present knowledge about delinquency is summarized along with ways to organize and use the information. Strategies which schools may employ to produce organizational change and discourage delinquency are enumerated, and steps to be taken in the action research model are reviewed. A guide lists suggestions for policy makers wishing to implement such organizational changes. (NRB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED204686

Schooling and Delinquency Prevention: Some Practical Ideas for Educators, Parents, Program Developers, and Researchers

Grant No. NIE-G-80-0113

Gary D. Gottfredson

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Report No. 304

February, 1981

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Hollifield

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Published by the Center for Social Organization of Schools, supported in part as a research and development center by funds from the United States National Institute of Education, Department of Education. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the National Institute of Education, and no official endorsement by the Institute should be inferred.

Center for Social Organization of Schools
The Johns Hopkins University
3505 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

CG 015304

STAFF

Edward L. McDill, Co-Director
James M. McPartland, Co-Director

Karl Alexander
Charles H. Beady
Henry J. Becker
Jomills H. Braddock, II
Ruth H. Carter
Martha A. Cook
Robert L. Crain
Doris R. Entwisle
Joyce L. Epstein
Gail M. Fennessey
James J. Fennessey
Homer D. C. Garcia
Denise C. Gottfredson
Gary D. Gottfredson
Linda S. Gottfredson
Stephen Hansell
Edward J. Harsch
James A. Harvey
John H. Hollifield
Lawrence F. Howe
Barbara J. Hucksoll
Nancy L. Karweit
Hazel G. Kennedy
Marshall B. Leavey
Nancy A. Madden
David J. Mangefrida
Julia B. McClellan
Anne McLaren
Phillip R. Morgan
Robert G. Newby
James M. Richards, Jr.
Donald C. Rickert Jr.
Robert E. Slavin
Gail E. Thomas
William T. Trent
Carol A. Weinreich

Introductory Statement

The Center for Social Organization of Schools has two primary objectives: to develop a scientific knowledge of how schools affect their students, and to use this knowledge to develop better school practices and organization.

The Center works through four programs to achieve its objectives. The Studies in School Desegregation program applies the basic theories of social organization of schools to study the internal conditions of desegregated schools, the feasibility of alternative desegregation policies, and the interrelation of school desegregation with other equity issues such as housing and job desegregation. The School Organiztaion program is currently concerned with authority-control structures, task structures, reward systems, and peer group processes in schools. It has produced a large-scale study of the effects of open schools, has developed Student Team Learning instructional processes for teaching various subjects in elementary and secondary schools, and has produced a computerized system for school-wide attendance monitoring. The School Process and Career Development program is studying transitions from high school to post secondary institutions and the role of schooling in the development of career plans and the actualization of labor market outcomes. The Studies in Delinquency and School Environments program is examining the interaction of school environments, school experiences, and individual characteristics in relation to in-school and later-life delinquency.

This report, prepared by the Studies in Delinquency and School Environments program, presents a clear theory of delinquency and proposes an action research strategy to develop delinquency prevention programs in schools.

Abstract

Developers of delinquency prevention programs, educational practitioners, community leaders, judges, legislators, and researchers share a common need for useful theories of delinquency. A useful theory is also a guide to research--it specifies important research questions and focuses research on practical problems. The theory presented here builds on the theories of Hirschi and Bandura. It assumes that home and school experiences can be rewarding or unrewarding. Youth who are able to gain rewards at home and in school are not delinquent because they have stakes in conformity. They develop commitments to conventional educational and occupational goals and belief in conventional social rules, they participate in rewarding activities, and they are bound by ties of affection to others who would disapprove of misconduct. School, community, and family influence the development of stakes in conformity by the reinforcement properties of the environments they provide. Delinquency can be prevented by altering reward structures to develop stakes in conformity and ties to parents, school, work, and nondelinquent peers. Creating change in the organization of schooling to prevent delinquency will require hard work. An action research strategy to develop delinquency prevention programs is discussed.

Introduction

Everyone is concerned with delinquency. Most crime in this country is committed by the young. Over half of the arrests for property crimes and over a third of the arrests for violent crimes are arrests of males between the ages of theirteen and twenty, but these youth compose less than one-tenth of our population. Adults are concerned about delinquency because they fear personal victimization, because their homes or businesses suffer losses, or because they are parents of young people. Youth are concerned because their own participation in delinquent behavior can profoundly influence their lives, because they are often the victims of youth crime, and because they experience conflicting demands and temptations during the turbulent adolescent years. School officials and teachers are concerned about delinquency because they are workers in a major institution affecting the lives of young people and therefore share in the responsibility for their socialization. They are also concerned because delinquency directly affects them on the job. And community leaders and legislators are concerned with delinquency because they are guardians of the public safety and are responsible for wise decisions that influence social responses to delinquency.

Everyone must make decisions related to these concerns. As voters, adults make decisions about school bond issues, elect school board members, vote on taxes to support or not support juvenile services, pass bond issues to erect low cost housing, and elect functionaries who decide where that housing will be located. As parents, adults make thousands of child-rearing decisions, and they decide where to send their children to school. They also decide whether to play an active role in supervising their children and interacting with teachers and school officials. Of

course, parents also decide on many occasions how to respond to their children's conduct. Youth decide how they will behave--whether they will restrain themselves when tempted to engage in delinquent behavior; how much effort they will devote to educational pursuits; with whom they will spend time; whom they will love, admire, and respect; and whether they believe social rules are worth following. School officials and teachers decide how to run their schools. They decide on curricula; school governance policies; classroom responses to student conduct; what rules to establish and enforce; and how individuals with different backgrounds, talents and resources will be treated. Community leaders, legislators, and judges make important decisions about the location, size, and funding of schools; about youth employment laws; about the location of business enterprises; about public or low-cost housing; about how young people will be treated in the arms of the law; and about services for families and youth that will be available in the community.

This paper provides guidance in making these decisions. It summarizes some of what we know about delinquency and presents a way to organize and use that knowledge.

Youth in School Today

Large-scale changes in the major social institutions affecting young people--family, work, and schools--have occurred over the past century (Gottfredson, 1980; President's Science Advising Committee on Youth, 1973). The position of the family as a source of education for adult work, social roles, and occupational skills has eroded. Increasing geographical mobility appears to have decreased the influence of extended families as a source of social interaction which integrates persons of different generations. In this century the involvement of youth in

gainful employment has declined dramatically while the participation of American youth in formal secondary education has soared. Unprecedented proportions of youth are now enrolled in school. Indeed, most states now have compulsory attendance laws which require attendance at school through age 16 or 17. Furthermore, the average number of days of school attended each year had increased by 1968 to 163 days, compared to 78 days actually attended in 1870.

A description of the status of contemporary youth would include the following components: (a) Youth are estranged from adults in an age-segregated system of compulsory schooling. (b) Youth are spending large amounts of time in school rather than being directly involved in work or even (to some degree) in the preparation for work. (c) The time spent in school is characterized by much lackluster activity focused on academic goals and a goodly amount of non-task time. (d) The payoff gained by some youth for their time spent in school in terms of labor market returns is moderate, not large--at least in the short run. (e) Youth are held to different standards of conduct than adults--youth tend to be treated leniently by the courts, police, and others. And (f) the population of youth engaged in secondary education is now very diverse, including many persons who in the past would not have continued their schooling through high school.

Formal academic schooling may be expected to be difficult and uncomfortable for some of today's youth, despite the wide array of social rewards associated with school attendance. The more a youth has difficulty with academic course work, the more likely a youth is to get into trouble with the law and to be disruptive in school (Bachman, O'Malley,

& Johnston, 1978; Hirschi, 1969). Furthermore, how far a young person eventually goes in school is strongly associated with the level of disruptive behavior the person engages in (Bachman et al., 1978). And, there are indications that the delinquent behavior of youth who drop out of school decreases after they drop out (Elliott & Voss, 1974).

A major task of childhood is learning to become an adult, including finding opportunities for experience with adult-like work and social rules. Education should foster this process. When a youth perceives that achievement of these opportunities is thwarted, or that schooling is irrelevant in the pursuit of adulthood, then delinquency may be seen as a shortcut to adult roles (Stinchcombe, 1964).

The foregoing suggests that careful attention be given to the issue of appropriate forms of education for a large group of students for whom ordinary schooling is ill suited. The recent report of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education (1980) also accords with this suggestion. Some observers (e.g., Glaser, 1975) go so far as to question the advisability of continued secondary education for such youth, but at the least careful attention to alternatives to conventional academic formal schooling is warranted.

A Theoretical Perspective to Generate Practical Strategies to Prevent Delinquency

Theory as a Guide to Action

This characterization of the status of contemporary youth implies that we need ways to change schooling to prevent delinquency. This section outlines a theoretical perspective that provides a useful guide to action in preventing delinquency.

Behind every idea about ways to prevent delinquenty is an implicit theory. Often the "theory" is a vague one that would not accord well with what we have come to expect from scientific theories. Often the relations among theoretical constructs are not clearly defined, operational definitions of the constructs are lacking, and so forth. Nevertheless, these ideas about delinquency prevention do constitute what may very loosely be termed "theory." An aim of both science and practice is to sharpen up such explanations or ideas so that they form consistent accounts of the phenomena (delinquency) which can be tested, modified, revised, and elaborated. The testing part of this process has, as its base, the explicit assumption that not all ideas are equal. Some ideas about preventing delinquency are better than others. Science and practice develop through the generation of good ideas and the rejection of poor ones.

The theory of delinquency prevention is not very well developed. Even our best theories are crude and incomplete explanations of delinquency, and in general the theories are not yet well tested. In many cases, the implications of these theories for prevention have never been tried in a form that would allow us to know whether or how well these prevention strategies would work. Nevertheless, the theories we have provide the best available guides to delinquency prevention. Because they generally have been subjected to some tests, we know that these are probably pretty good ideas.

A Theory

A schematic representation of a theory for understanding delinquency is shown in Figure 1. Four basic ideas underlie this way of thinking

about delinquency. First, everyone learns and develops characteristic ways of approaching life and its challenges as a result of his or her experiences. We learn by observing how others behave and noting the consequences of their behavior, and we learn from the rewarding, unrewarding, or punishing experiences of our everyday lives. Our learning is a complex cognitive process. Each of us develops "theories," plans, and expectations as well as habits of action as a result of this social learning process. Some of this process is conscious, and some is not. But we learn that our actions influence our environments and the reactions we get from others, we learn that our environment encourages and discourages different kinds of behaviors, and we learn that our environments present characteristic obstacles and opportunities. Through this learning process we develop plans, expectations, and predictions that are some of the fundamental reasons we behave as we do. This basic idea is closely related to the ideas of social learning perspective (Bandura, 1971) and personal contruct psychology (Kelly, 1955), and ideas about plans and behaviors (Miller, Galanter, & Pribram, 1960).

A second basic idea is that all of us would behave in self-gratifying and unsocialized ways were we free to do so, but that socially generated constraints hold our impulses in check. We conform not only because of formal mechanisms of social control such as laws, police, the courts, and so on, but also because of more personal social bonds that create for us stakes in conformity. These social bonds include attachment to parents, peers, and teachers; commitment to conventioanl social goals; involvement in conventional social activities; and belief in conventional social rules (Hirschi, 1969).

Attachment to parents, teachers, and nondelinquent peers constrains us from delinquent behavior. This is because parents generally value adherence to central social norms. Storng ties to parents prevent delinquent behavior because youth risk losing the affection of their parents if they misbehave. Attachment to parents therefore creates a stake in conformity. Attachment to teachers and nondelinquent peers works in the same way. The expectations about the consequences of behavior develop through the social learning process described earlier. We learn that we risk the disapproval of those to whom we are attached with certain kinds of behavior, and we deliberately as well as unconsciously behave accordingly. If we are not tied by bonds of affection to others, or if they do not respond to misconduct by withdrawing affection, showing disapproval, or by punishment, then this learning does not occur.

Commitment to conventional social goals--educational attainment, a good job, a steady income--also creates stakes in conformity. Misconduct can jeopardize a person's educational or career prospects. A person committed to success in education has something to lose by misconduct. A person not committed to such conventional social goals has little to lose. For example, a person who perceives little realistic prospect of doing well in school may have little commitment to education and thus have little to lose. These perceptions and commitments develop through the social learning process.

Another set of stakes in conformity is created by involvement in rewarding conventional activities. This may be involvement in schoolwork, athletics, community service clubs, or church artistic groups. Involvement constrains a person from engaging in delinquent behavior not just

because it takes up time, but because misconduct can jeopardize a person's opportunity to participate in the rewarding activities. Involvement thus creates a stake in conformity. An involved youth has something to lose by misconduct. An uninvolved youth does not. Involvement develops in the same ways as do other social bonds--that is, through the social learning process. To an important degree, involvement is also determined by the social arrangements in a youth's environment. For example, if only good students can participate in athletics, a poor student may have little reason or opportunity to be involved in either schoolwork or athletics, and thus may have little stake in conformity.

Finally, belief in conventional social rules is a fourth element that restrains us from misconduct. People differ in the extent to which they accept the moral validity of conventional rules. By observing the actions of others and the consequences of their behavior, by experiencing the consequences of behavior themselves, and by internalizing the values and normative expectations of others to whom they are attached, people come to believe in conventional social rules to varying degrees. Thus, this form of restraint against unsocialized behavior also develops through a social learning process.

Some evidence supporting this basic idea--that attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief are elements of a social bond--is presented by Hirschi (1969), who presented the idea in this form, and by Wiatrowski and Swatko (1979) and Hindelang (1973).

A third basic idea is that people differ in the resources they bring into a social situation. These resources are determined in part by a host of socioeconomic influences. Widespread racial prejudices often limit the

resources available to minority youth. An affluent family background can make the acquisition of reading skills and interpersonal or middle-class social skills easier because of the resources and encouragement it provides. And the nature of the community within which a youth lives will influence that person's sense of the possibilities, and provides the models upon which that person's behavior is in part based. A youth growing up in a middle-class family in an affluent suburban community will, through the social learning process, develop a different set of personal expectations--and different characteristic ways of approaching schooling and other people--than will a youth from an inner-city family living in a neighborhood where most adult males are unemployed or work at unrewarding, unprestigious jobs. Differences in the background characteristics or resources among people result in individual differences in the scholastic ability and social skills youth can call on in life. These differences in resources are of major importance in school. A person who lacks scholastic interpersonal resources will have difficulty gaining rewards in school.

The fourth basic idea is that school is a major social institution in the life of an adolescent--a place where the social learning process is played out. Youth can find ways to be rewarded for their schoolwork, become attached to teachers and nondelinquent peers, become involved in conventional activities, and have experiences that strengthen their belief in conventional social rules, and thus strengthen their restraints against misconduct. Alternatively, and too often, youth with low academic and interpersonal skills will find schools "rigged" against them (Howard, 1978). Because they have difficulty with schoolwork, because they do not behave as model youth, they experience failure in school. This failure weakens

the bonds of social control. Attachment fails to develop because the social interaction in school is unrewarding, and commitment to educational goals is perceived as unrealistic. Involvement is undermined because only the good students can participate, and belief is undermined because the youth cannot make the system work for him or herself.

So, school rewards are central to this theory of delinquency. The bonds of social control are strengthened for youth who find school rewarding, and they are weakened for youth who do not. Weakened restraints produce a cycle of continuing school failure and delinquent or disruptive behavior. On the other hand, experiences of school success result in a cycle of continuing academic achievement and vocational or career success.

Prevention Implications

The foregoing is primarily an account of why some individuals engage in delinquent behavior more than do others. Prevention, however, must focus on school social organizational influences on delinquency. Consequently the theoretical perspective just described must be translated into organizational terms. The aim is to show how, according to this theoretical perspective, schools can not only fail to prevent but may even foster delinquency.

The model for school organizational influences on delinquency shown in Figure 2 is constructed from several sources. First, the organizational counterparts of the theoretical model sketched earlier are incorporated. Second, this model is drawn from research on school organizational influences on school disruption rates (Gottfredson & Daiger, 1979; Gottfredson, Joffe, & Gottfredson, 1981; National Institute of Education, 1978). Finally, this model incorporates the practical observation that organi-

zations must plan for and create change if they are to be effective in coping with their social problems (Blanton & Alley, 1975; Howard, 1978; Johnson, Bird, & Little, 1979). In short, the Figure 2 model attempts to integrate delinquency theory with the results of survey research on school organization and practical experience in creating organizational change. It takes account of two important features of the distribution of delinquent or disruptive behavior. The first is that schools located in less affluent urban locations typically experience the most violence.[1] The second is that, community influences notwithstanding, school policies, practices and climates are important (Gottfredson & Daiger, 1979; Gottfredson, Joffe, & Gottfredson, 1981).

The organizational model assumes that the characteristics of a school's studentry and the resources of the school are determined in part by the nature of the community in which it is located. Schools located in high crime inner city neighborhoods where unemployment rates are high, a high proportion of families are female-headed, and the general levels of education are low are apt to serve many students who experience difficulty with traditional schooling. Many of these students may have developed only weak social restraints against misconduct and may be exposed to relatively many delinquent peers. In addition, because these communities do not mobilize resources as well as more affluent communities, the schools have relatively few resources and have difficulty recruiting and retaining top-notch administrators and teachers.

---

[1] The ecological correlations of delinquency with the socioeconomic level of communities is much higher (negative) than the corresponding individual level correlations. See Gordon (1967), Block (1979), Smith (1972), Gottfredson and Daiger (1979), Gottfredson (1980), and Shaw and McKay (1969).

All this contributes to a school climate that fails for several reasons to increase students' stakes in conformity. If the schools provide few opportunities for many students to experience academic success or be rewarded for their educational experiences--if they are "rigged" against poor students (in Howard's, 1978, terms) because they reward only the top students (cf. Johnson et al., 1979)--then many students have little reason to be attached to the school or to be committed to educational goals. If the school fails to provide clear, firm, and consistent responses to behavior or if school personnel are unclear about appropriate responses, then it is difficult for students to learn to cope with the environment, and belief in conventional social rules may erode. And, confusion about school policies and poor teacher-administrator cooperation results in a lack of planning for change and a lack of concrete action to create change. Finally, because the resultant disruption, truancy, and low academic performance is unpleasant, teachers and administrators are dissatisfied, and able personnel leave for more pleasant working conditions elsewhere if they can.

This model also assumes, however, that the school can act to break this cycle. Naturally, the range of options and the realistic scope of organizational change is limited. Broad social and economic conditions are large influences that schools have difficulty altering in major ways. But many strategies are within the scope of a school's action.

1. Increase student attachments to socially appropriate peers by providing multiple opportunities for cooperative interaction both within and outside of class.

2. Increase student attachment to teachers by giving homeroom teachers special roles in advising students, reinforcing success in all

areas of school activity, handling student problems, and maintaining contact with parents.

3. Increase student involvement and attachment to the community by giving students rewarding roles in helping community members.

4. Give students access to success by rewarding weekly progress net of past levels of performance instead of allocating rewards based on relative standing in the school or class.

5. Involve parents in concrete tasks to improve student performance by providing them with reports on student progress in behavior, attendance, and achievement, and teaching them how to reinforce gains in these areas.

6. Make school rules fair, firm, and consistent, and make sure that students understand them and participate in setting them.

7. Assess the extent to which strategies are being implemented and to which they are working, and use this information to revise strategies or objectives in a continuing cycle of improvement.

Advice for Policy Makers

Because preventing delinquency is an important goal, learning how this goal can be achieved is important. Courage, effort, and skill are required to learn to do better. Even learning that a particular prevention strategy was not implemented as intended is a positive contribution. It points the way for further efforts directed at achieving program implementation.

In his remarks at the oversight hearing on the Safe School Study (National Institute of Education, 1979), Congressman Ike Andrews, Chair of the House Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, illustrated a

central issue to be faced in learning to do a better job of preventing school disruption.[2]

> I would suggest that the conclusions in your study and your recommendations are probably accurate and wise. I say that because my wife, a seventh-grade teacher, and my mother, who taught for some 30-odd years, and my daughter, who has now taught for 8 years, could have told you the same things before you started the study... (It) is like the farmer who did not buy the book on agriculture. He said he did not need to learn any more. He was not doing half as well as he already knew how to do.

A large part of the task of learning to prevent school disruption is learning how to bring about the adoption of effective strategies. We will learn how to do this only by trying to implement promising strategies and observing the conditions that lead to successful implementation.

The path to surer knowledge laid out here is not an easy path to tread. It will require the active cooperation of policy makers, administrators, teachers, the public, and evaluation researchers. Immediate, large scale reductions in school disruption are not be expected. Instead, the best that can be hoped for, at least in the short run, is a gradual increase in knowledge and a modest improvement in the orderliness of

---

[2] Congressman Andrews may be right about the failure of educators and policy makers to implement what is supposed to be effective, but at the same time he overestimates the accuracy of their perceptions about effective strategies. For example, although many would argue for smaller class sizes as a way to reduce disruption, there is no support for such a strategy in our analyses. Similarly, arguments that increasing student influence in school decision-making will reduce disruption receive no support. Other remedies specifically mentioned by the Congressman in the full text of his remarks, such as more psychotherapists to help youngsters who show signs of problems, are ideas which have received no research support or even negative support in the literature (McCord, 1978).

schools.

We do have some good ideas about preventing delinquency, and a major problem is learning how to put those ideas into practice. The task of implementation will not be easy. I will try to characterize a process that schools and communities can use to create organizational change to prevent delinquency.

First, let me caricature the situation that sometimes perpetuates a situation in which delinquency is not prevented. Figure 3 outlines this static situation. Few serious steps are taken to diagnose the organization and the nature of the problem. People in the school or community may be vaguely and sometimes acutely unhappy, and obstacles to change may be perceived, but the active search for resources to overcome those obstacles is not pursued. As a consequence, no workable strategies or plans to overcome these obstacles and solve these problems emerge, and potential resources are not used to foster change. In a traditionally organized school, rewards continue to be accessible only to students of high academic achievement. The students at the bottom of the achievement ladder continue to experience mostly failure. They see little prospect that committing themselves to educational goals and involving themselves in schoolwork will pay off. Because the resources available are not used, the scope of youth involvement and attachment remains narrow. Schools may rely on the narrow range of responses to student conduct readily apparent to them--suspensions, expulsions, low marks--rather than broaden the scope of response by using parent power or by improving in-school disciplinary practices. Thus only weak or inconsistent consequences for youth behavior are perceived, rules are

ambiguous, and students fail to develop belief in the value of conventional social rules. Because serious attempts to monitor the situation and to assess its consequences are not made, the consequences are not clearly delineated, the organization fails to change and improve, and delinquency results.

Of course, no school or community wants to resemble this caricature of organizational stagnation. There is a clear alternative. It is the action research model (Lewin, 1947; Blanton & Alley, 1975). Its elements are presented in Figure 4 and include the following steps:

1. Serious and systematic attempts to define the problem and an analysis of the organization's forcefield--the obstacles to achievement of the organization's goals and the resources available to overcome those obstacles.

2. The development of strategies or plans to use the organization's resources to overcome the obstacles to changing the circumstances that create problems. For example, if the diagnosis suggests that a reward structure making it impossible for some students to experience success is a problem, then a strategy to change the reward structures must be developed. Such a strategy should use the available resources. A school might implement a system that rewards students for designated improvements in their own performance rather than on the basis of a comparison with their classmates (Slavin, in press), and might use parents to broaden the scope of rewards for improvement (Takeson & Forehand, 1979; Barth, 1979). These strategies would be specific. The plan would specify who would do what, when, and with what anticipated effect.

3. Such specific plans are necessary for the next element of the action research model: monitoring the implementation of the interventions according to these strategies and assessing whether the expected results occur. Monitoring provides the basis for integrating the knowledge about what works into the standard policies and practices of the organization. If the interventions are not being implemented or not working as expected, monitoring triggers renewed efforts to diagnose the problem and specify obstacles and resources. This renewed forcefield analysis is the basis for altering strategies and plans and continuing the action research cycle.

There is nothing new or unique about this strategy for program development. It incorporates elements of what every good administrator already knows. Its virtue is that it provides a flexible model for sound organizational change, specifies the steps required, anticipates that obstacles and setbacks will occur, and implies an organizational framework for change that involves organizational self-study or research. This is the kind of process that holds promise for preventing delinquency.

A Policy-Maker's Guide

In attempting to prevent disruption the wise policy maker will:

1. Recognize that spectacular results are not to be expected immediately.

2. Be skeptical about any particular claim that the solution to school disruption is in hand.

3. Develop strategies to implement promising organizational changes to reduce delinquency.

4. Provide mechanisms to monitor the implementation of those interventions, to see if they are really implemented as planned.

5. Make explicit plans to evaluate prevention programs, using the most powerful designs possible, to see if they produce the expected results.

6. Put his or her favorite ideas to reduce school violence on the line by subjecting them to rigorous tests.

7. Expect some failures. Honest evaluations of honest efforts do not always produce positive results. Try to learn from the experience, design a new program, and evaluate that.

8. Persevere. There is reason to believe that not only broad social interventions, but also rather specific steps taken by schools can succeed in reducing school disruption.

References

Atkeson, B. M., & Forehand, R. Home-based reinforcement programs designed to modify classroom behavior: A review and methodological evaluation. Psychological Bulletin, 1979, 86, 1298-1308.

Bachman, J. G., O'Malley, P. M., & Johnston, J. Adolescence to adulthood: Change and stability in the lives of young men. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Survey Research, 1978.

Bandura, A. Social learning theory. Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press. 1971.

Barth, R. Home-based reinforcement of school behavior: A review and analysis. Review of Educational Research, 1979, 49, 436-458.

Blanton, J., & Alley, S. Program development: A manual for organizational self study. (Prepared under contract no. HSM-42-42-143 from NIMH.) Nicasio, Calif.: Social Action Research Center, 1975.

Block, R. Community, environment, and violent crime. Criminology, 1979, 17, 46-57.

Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education. Giving youth a better chance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980.

Elliott, D. S., & Voss, H. L. Delinquency and dropout. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington, 1974.

Glaser, D. Strategic criminal justice planning (DHEW No. ADM 75-195). Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975.

Gordon, R. A. Issues in the ecological study of delinquency. American Sociological Review, 1967, 32, 927-944.

Gottfredson, G. D. Schooling and delinquency (Background paper prepared for the Panel on Research on Rehabilitative Techniques of the Committee on Research on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, National Academy of Sciences). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools, 1980.

Gottfredson, G. D., & Daiger, D. C. Disruption in six hundred schools (Report No. 289). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools, 1979.

Gottfredson, G. D., Joffe, R. D., & Gottfredson, D. C. Measuring victimization and the explanation of school disruption. (Forthcoming). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools, 1981.

Hindeland, M. J. Causes of delinquency: A partial replication and extension. Social Problems, 1973, 20, 471-487.

Hirschi, T. Causes of delinquency. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

Howard, E. R. School discipline desk book. West Nyack, N.Y.: Parker, 1978.

Johnston, G., Bird, T., & Little, J. W. Delinquency prevention: Theories and strategies. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1979.

Kelly, G. A. A theory of personality. New York: Norton, 1955.

Lewin, K. Group decision and social change. In T. M. Newcomb & E. L. Hartley (eds.), Readings in social psychology. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1947.

McCord, J. A thirty-year follow-up of treatment effects. American Psychologist, 1978, 33, 284-289.

Miller, G. A., Galanter, E., & Pribram, K. H. Plans and the structure of behavior. U.S.A.: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1960.

National Institute of Education. Violent Schools--Safe schools: The safe school study report to congress. Washington, D.C.: Author, 1978.

Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. Juvenile delinquency and urban areas (rev. ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969. (1st ed. 1942.)

Slavin, R. E. Effects of individual learning expectations on student achievement. Journal of Educational Psychology, in press.

Smith, D. M. The geography of social well-being in the United States: An introduction to territorial social indicators. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Stinchcombe, A. L. Rebellion in a high school. Chicago: Quadrangle, 1964.

Wiatrowski, M. D., & Swatko, M. K. Social control theory: A multivariate test. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools, 1979.

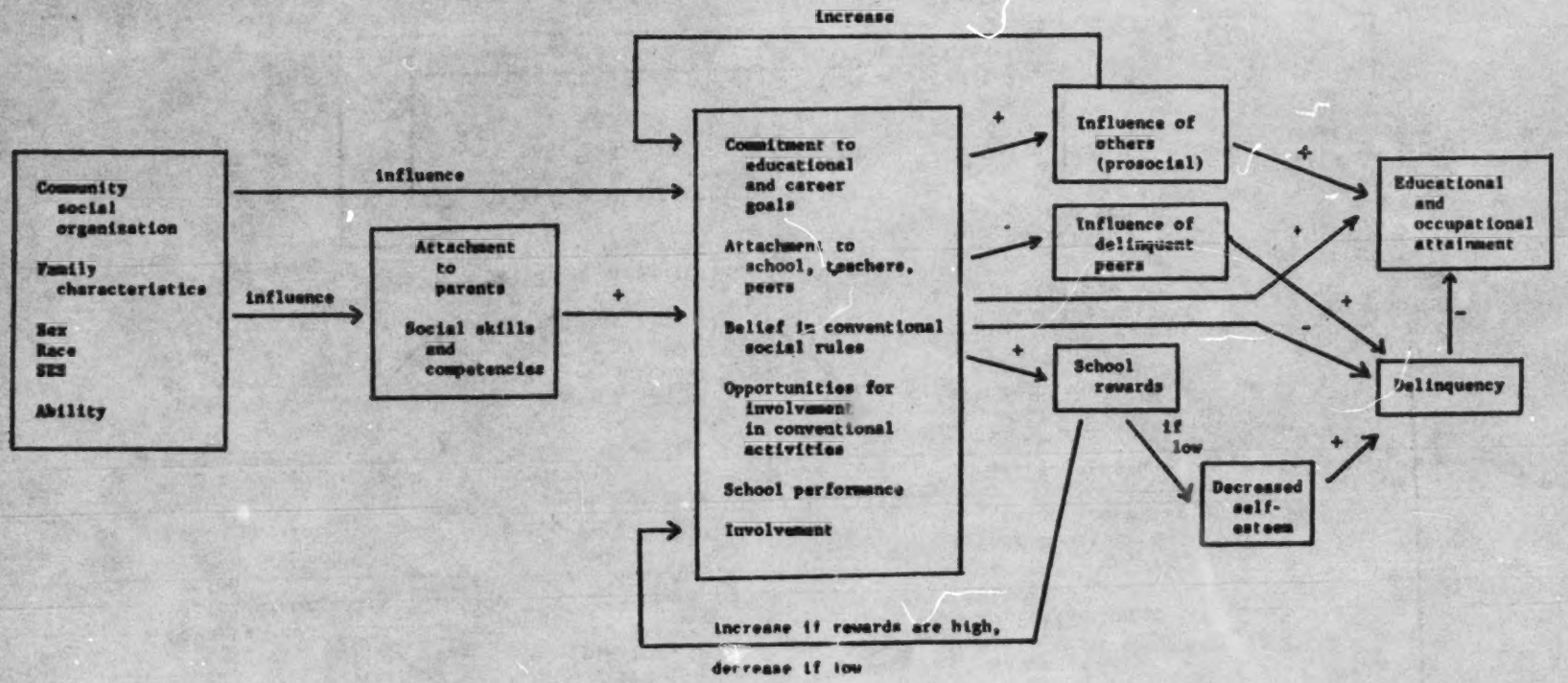

Figure 1. A theoretical scheme for explaining delinquency and career attainment focusing on school experiences.

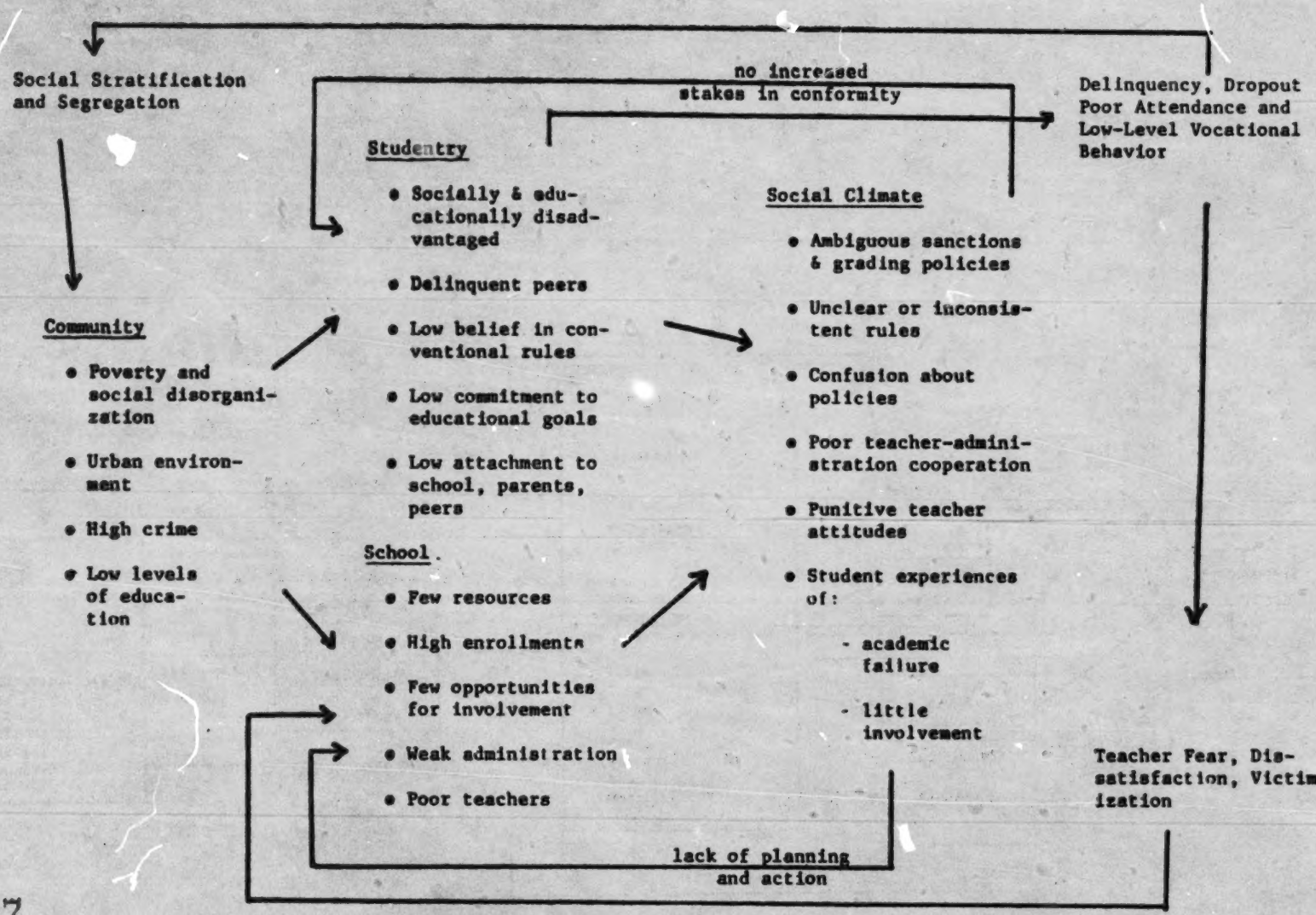
Social Stratification and Segregation
no increased stakes in conformity
Delinquency, Dropout Poor Attendance and Low-Level Vocational Behavior
Studentry
• Socially & educationally disadvantaged
• Delinquent peers
• Low belief in conventional rules
• Low commitment to educational goals
• Low attachment to school, parents, peers
Social Climate
• Ambiguous sanctions & grading policies
• Unclear or inconsistent rules
• Confusion about policies
• Poor teacher-administration cooperation
• Punitive teacher attitudes
• Student experiences of:
- academic failure
- little involvement
Community
• Poverty and social disorganization
• Urban environment
• High crime
• Low levels of education
School
• Few resources
• High enrollments
• Few opportunities for involvement
• Weak administration
• Poor teachers
Teacher Fear, Dissatisfaction, Victimization
lack of planning and action

Figure 2: An Ecological Model for the Failure of Controls in a School

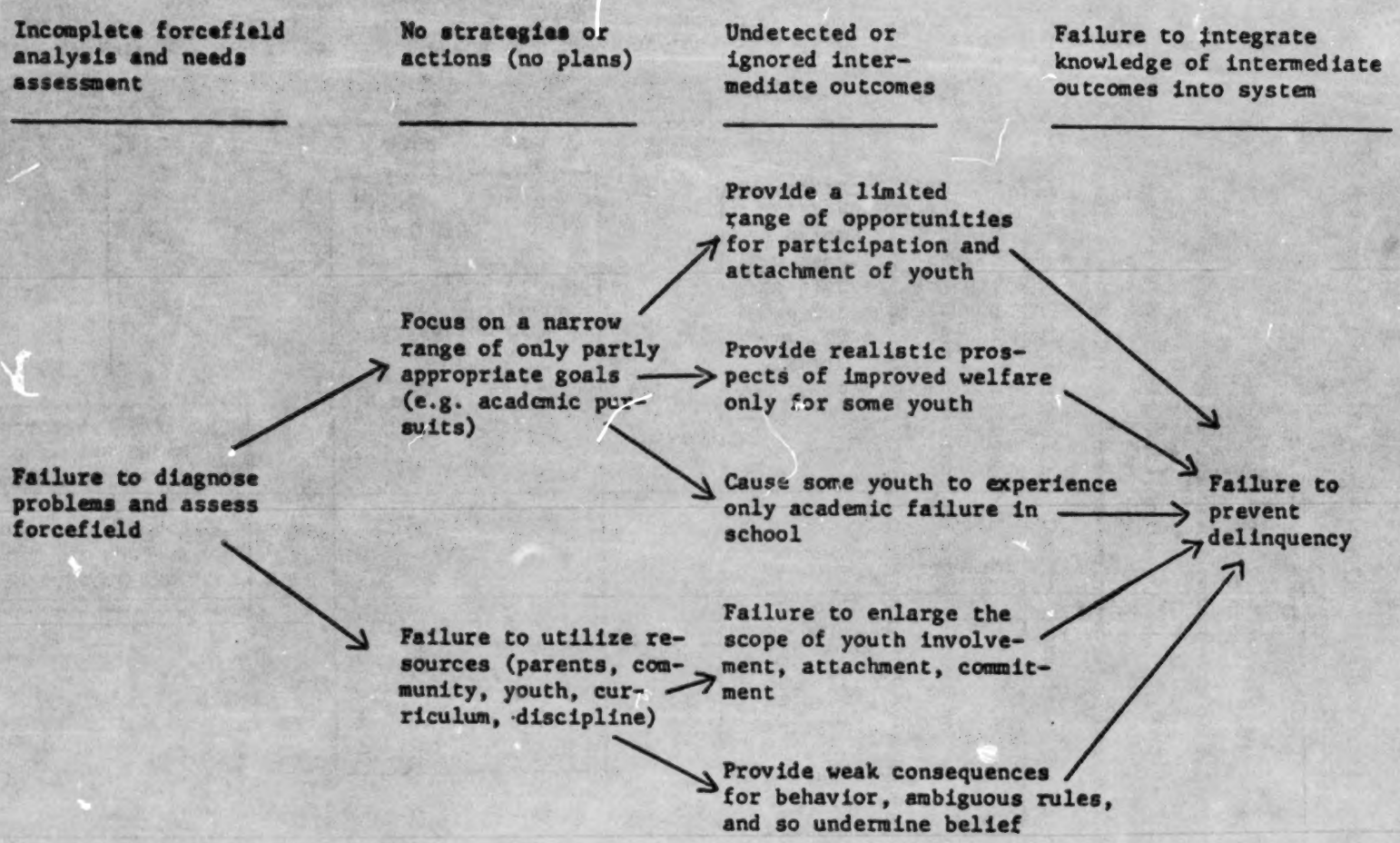
Incomplete forcefield analysis and needs assessment
No strategies or actions (no plans)
Undetected or ignored intermediate outcomes
Failure to integrate knowledge of intermediate outcomes into system
Failure to diagnose problems and assess forcefield
Focus on a narrow range of only partly appropriate goals (e.g. academic pursuits)
Failure to utilize resources (parents, community, youth, curriculum, discipline)
Provide a limited range of opportunities for participation and attachment of youth
Provide realistic prospects of improved welfare only for some youth
Cause some youth to experience only academic failure in school
Failure to enlarge the scope of youth involvement, attachment, commitment
Provide weak consequences for behavior, ambiguous rules, and so undermine belief
Failure to prevent delinquency

Figure 3. How a failure to assess organizational forcefields, forecast the consequences of current practices, and take action to create change in these practices may lead to an undesired organizational outcome

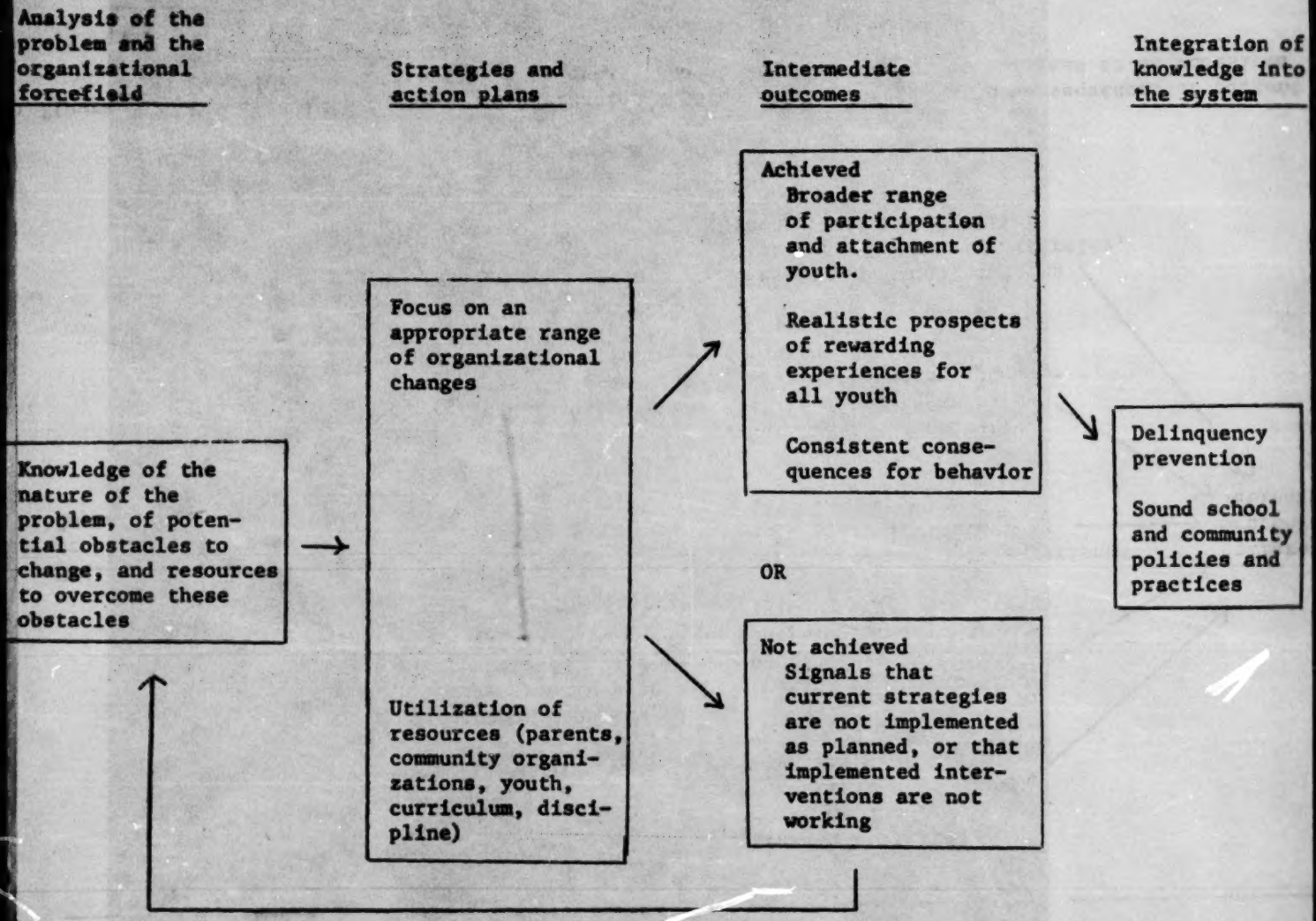
Analysis of the problem and the organizational forcefield
Strategies and action plans
Intermediate outcomes
Integration of knowledge into the system
Knowledge of the nature of the problem, of potential obstacles to change, and resources to overcome these obstacles
Focus on an appropriate range of organizational changes
Utilization of resources (parents, community organizations, youth, curriculum, discipline)
Achieved
Broader range of participation and attachment of youth.
Realistic prospects of rewarding experiences for all youth
Consistent consequences for behavior
OR
Not achieved
Signals that current strategies are not implemented as planned, or that implemented interventions are not working
Delinquency prevention
Sound school and community policies and practices

Figure 4. How an action research strategy may lead to desired organizational change.